

TriUniversity Group of Libraries:

Experiences and Lessons from a Comprehensive Collaborative Initiative

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Abstract

In January 1995 the Tri-University Group of Libraries (Wilfrid Laurier, Guelph and Waterloo) was formed as a collaborative partnership to enable the coordination of their services and resources in such a manner that the three libraries were perceived and experienced by their user community as a single library serving the needs of the three institutions. This presentation will explore the key administrative and leadership experiences of the collaboration outlining the need to adopt new organizational techniques and evolve new organizational cultures if such collaborations are to be successful.

Paper

Introduction

The libraries of the University of Guelph, the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University have formed a collaboration to enable the co-ordination of library services and resources. It is our intention that the three libraries be perceived and experienced by the local academic user community as a harmonized library system serving the information needs of the three parent institutions.

Since February 1995, when the University Librarians and the Presidents signed the foundation agreement, the TriUniversity Group of Libraries (TUG) has:

- purchased a remote storage facility
- selected, developed and installed a uniform, integrated, common automated library system
- mounted a joint electronic information resource and services system

The process has altered the way each library functions. The collaboration demands a different approach to organisational development, library management and executive accountability. Experience taught us that effective collaboration works best in an environment based on:

- trust
- nurtured relationships
- leadership
- learning opportunity

- staff participation
- organisational development

Co-operation is not new; nevertheless, it is complex. It works for us because we recognise on two important values:

- user needs are primary, and
- a continuous program of organisational development is essential

A new culture is emerging within our libraries. There is commitment to enabling staff in the three libraries, within the three distinctive universities, to work towards the "seamlessly integrated program of library collections and services" identified in the foundation agreement for TUG. The TriUniversity Group of Libraries demonstrates the power of collaboration. The collaborative model may interest other libraries searching for a way to address the challenges of providing information services and resources in a rapidly changing world.

This presentation will explore the principal administrative and leadership experiences of the collaboration. The short history of the TriUniversity Group of Libraries suggests that libraries involved in extensive collaborative initiatives must adopt new organisational techniques and evolve new organisational cultures if they are to be successful.

TriUniversity Group of Libraries: Background, Goals and Objectives

Post-secondary education in Ontario is publicly funded. Seventeen universities are autonomous institutions receiving more than 50% of their funding from the province (the remainder is from tuition, research contracts, commercial revenue, etc.). These universities range from the smallest, Nipissing University with 2,100 students, to the largest, the University of Toronto, with over 40,000 students.

The TriUniversity Group of Libraries consists of the libraries at the University of Guelph, the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. These universities are located in Southern Ontario approximately 100km west of Toronto. Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier are both located in the city of Waterloo and are only a few blocks apart. Guelph is located in the city of Guelph, 20km east of Waterloo. Wilfrid Laurier University, the smallest institution in the collaboration, is also the oldest having been established 1924 (although based on a college founded in 1910). Primarily an undergraduate institution with a research focus, WLU has academic strengths in business, social work and music. The University of Waterloo was founded in 1957 as a breakaway institution from Wilfrid Laurier (then known as Waterloo Lutheran University). Waterloo is world famous for its programs in computer science and has major strengths in such areas as engineering, mathematics and psychology. The University of Guelph was founded in 1964 (but is based on founding colleges dating back to the late 19th century). Guelph has national strengths in agriculture, veterinary medicine and applied life sciences

TriUniversity Group of Libraries has a combined staff of almost 400 FTE a budget of over \$25 million and a library collection of more than 7.5 million volumes. The primary user community is 45,000 students and 1,700 faculty. TUG is also a major information resource for the citizens and businesses of Canada's Technology Triangle (CTT) including Cambridge, Guelph and Kitchener/Waterloo.

The initial TUG agreement called for a "a seamlessly integrated program of library collections and services". The agreement included three major themes:

1. Information Resources and Services

- a) Rationalised Collection Development
- b) Document Delivery and InterLibrary Loan
- c) Database Sharing
- d) Networked Information Resources

2. Joint Storage Facility

3. Integrated Library System

Why Did This Partnership Come About?

The basic challenge was how three university libraries, constrained by unprecedented budget cuts, could move forward with the new and enhanced information services and resources essential to contemporary academic libraries and necessary for the academic missions of the institutions. The solution was to create a multi-institutional collaboration where the staff and resources of the three libraries were brought together in a broad series of inter-linked initiatives. The focus and central objective was clear: responding more effectively to the needs of our users.

While the three libraries had a history of modest cooperation dating back many years the funding crisis in Ontario universities during the 1990s was a primary motivator for enhanced agreements amongst the group. The fiscal imperative was immediate and it continues. In the past two years alone Ontario universities have experienced a 15% reduction in provincial funding (Council of Ontario Universities). This is a far greater reduction than in other parts of Canada and in dramatic contrast to the increased funding for public institutions in the United States. Concurrent with this fiscal constraint was a convergence of needs across the three libraries. Each library was suffering major serials cancellations as a result of dramatically reduced purchasing power and each needed to replace an aging or inadequate library system. It was clear in the early 1990s that the libraries would be able to survive and thrive if they sought collaborative solutions.

At the heart of the TriUniversity Group of Libraries initiative lies the solution to a problem faced by many universities: at a time of increased institutional competition how can one create and sustain a multi-institutional collaboration that enables both common commitment and individual success? TUG is not a unique situation dependent on specific local circumstances. The guiding principles and techniques used by TUG have

evolved over time and would probably support collaborative programs or action at any institution of higher learning. The important lessons learned with TUG are less about innovative applications of information technology (although this is critical) and more about how people and organizations can work closely together based on shared objectives, common understanding and a commitment to collaboration as an approach to individual success.

The collaborative model underlying TUG is portable because it can be adapted to different situations and environments. The key strategy is to create the solid foundation and build relationships that nurture success. It is illustrative that the emerging Ontario Universities Digital Library Transformation Project, a multi-million dollar collaborative library project on a province-wide scale sponsored by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the Council of Ontario University Libraries (OCUL), was initiated by COU in part because the TUG initiative had demonstrated to the presidents of Ontario universities that large scale multi-institutional collaboration was both possible and effective.

Achievements

Within the comprehensive objectives of the collaboration there have been significant achievements.

Many collaborative initiatives are projects that involve only a specific service of the co-operating organisations. These co-operative ventures usually operate outside the institutional culture. They are parallel developments; they have an important effect on the objectives of the organisations, but do not touch the attitudes, styles or the way the people in the organisation views their world. The TUG story is about a transformation: from three independent, self-reliant operations into a collaboration that is beginning to blend the resources of the three into harmonious services that will to appear, to the user, to operate as a sympathetic whole. This is collaboration on a deep level. It suggests an organisational transformation in many aspects of each library's culture. The collaboration requires considered change to several operations within the three supporting institutions. It is also serving to preserve unique institutional identities.

1. Staff Expertise

The most important effect has been on of staff expertise. TUG now has several interconnected projects and task groups made up of staff from all three libraries. These teams are engaged in such developments as shared database provision, co-operative cataloguing, common technical support, data resources, staff and user training and shared web development. The major productivity effect of the TriUniversity Group of Libraries is in leveraging the power of many; the gains achieved by collaboration action.

All this has occurred during a period of unprecedented cuts in provincial funding. Library budgets have been dramatically reduced and staff complements have declined. The productivity results that TUG is most proud of are those that allow the libraries to

innovate and develop new services and resources during a period of extraordinary restraint.

2. Cost Avoidance

Specific cost reductions attributable to TUG can best be quantified in terms of cost avoidance. The jointly purchased and operated Library Annex (a storage facility for lesser used materials) offset the ongoing costs of warehouse leasing by two of the universities and opened up the opportunity to lease unused space in the Annex (with this income helping to support the building operating costs). Negotiations are underway with three separate organizations for space and storage services. Acquiring the Library Annex avoided the substantial costs of either building new libraries or constructing significant extensions to the existing libraries on the three campuses. This cost of avoidance is estimated to be in excess of \$20 million.

In a similar manner, acquiring three separate library systems (instead of the single shared system) would have been approximately 50% more expensive for each library. Mounting three separate library automation projects would have been a substantial burden on staff, resulting in further increased costs and more time.

Cost avoidance is beginning to be achieved in library acquisitions. Serials cancellation programs are a common event for academic libraries as inflation for scholarly journals continues and budgets are not increased. The collaborative process has enabled a TUG approach to serial subscription cancellation that will facilitate reductions in duplicate subscriptions (journal titles held in more than one library). This year it will be possible to reduce \$300,000 of duplicate journal titles through this co-operative effort.

3. Specific Initiatives

Library Annex: acquired a shared storage facility (35,000 sq. ft building; about 3300 square metres) moved in a collection of over 500,000 volumes, enabled on site visits and provided enhance retrieval services to these materials.

Enhanced Document Delivery and Interlibrary Loan: staff have dramatically reduced the document delivery/interlibrary loan turnaround time among the three libraries (at the same time that we have experienced a 400% increase in documents requested and delivered). They have also implemented an access service to SwetScan, a table-of-contents service.

Shared Databases: mounted over a dozen scholarly databases using a shared database system (ERL: the Electronic Reference Library) operated by one of the libraries and used at all three. A user survey revealed an over an 80% approval rating on this system. Access to SwetScan, a table of contents service.

Shared Library System (TRELIS): developed system selection criteria, completed an intensive evaluation process, made a unanimous system choice, undertook a massive

data conversion and managed a complex system implementation with the first modules of the new library system (TRELIS is TUG's implementation of the Voyager system from Endeavor Information Systems) going live in March 1998 and the full system up and running at all three libraries by May 1, 1998.

Data Resource Centre: an innovative service to provide easy, web accessible access to key numeric and statistical databases; provide consultation and user support; supporting the use of statistical data in both research and teaching. There is great potential for a significant change in undergraduate teaching by utilizing this service. This is a "six way" partnership (the three TUG libraries and the computing centers at each university).

Electronic Theses: a project involving the libraries and Graduate Studies to move toward the submission of graduate thesis in electronic format. This proposal will create TUG-wide standards and attempt to restrain costs. Electronic theses will dramatically improve scholarly access without increasing costs.

Web Development: staff from all three libraries are at early stages of the development of a TUG Libraries website; the goal is to integrate local web environments and create an extensive web resource capable of supporting the various TUG initiatives to serve the user communities of all three universities.

Open Learning (distance education): the development of a collaborative library service support to open learning (distance education) programs at the three universities is being explored. A pilot project focused on a career counseling degree program has been initiated.

Lessons and Observations

Inter-institutional collaboration on the scale of the TriUniversity Group of Libraries is complex. Bringing together three different organisations to work effectively requires nurturing and planning. While it is important to understand the "why" and the "what" of collaboration, it is also important to consider the "how."

Effective collaboration is not accidental; there are processes that can be used to make collaboration more valuable and successful. The beginning is realising that the real task is cultural transformation: a conscious and open examination of values, personal systems and attitudes. A collaborative strategic agenda will introduce organisational changes that penetrate an institution's structure. Institutional leaders need to anticipate and prepare for the effects of change. Conflicts will result and should be prepared for through support for training in human relations and life skill as well as technical abilities. The biggest investment has not been in hardware, which will wear out, or in software, which will be replaced but in people, who will endure and leave a legacy.

Four areas of influence in creating the climate for effective inter-institutional collaboration are critical: building relationships, learning, leadership and community building/community development.

1. Building Relationships

The most important factor in successful collaboration is human relationships. Life skills need to be built, and sustained among the staff of the collaborating organisations. Partnerships are established by getting to know each other, spending time together and working on events, projects or teams. Despite the geographic proximity of the three libraries, few of the staff knew each other or had worked together in other contexts. It was important to simply to get to know each other. Library leaders created events that had a goal of bringing staff together.

For example, in the fall of 1995 the combined staff members of the three Circulation departments (approximately 80 people) spent a day together "workshopping" ideas about collaboration and change. These are front-line staff, often overlooked in planning co-operative ventures. Some of the most interesting ideas emerged from discussions of front line staff. Since this workshop the circulation team has worked towards TUG-wide circulation harmonisation practices from three previously very different sets of practice. This harmonisation process it required a level of team work and group process unprecedented in our organisations. Looking back one can see the importance of that initial workshop in creating the key relationships that would be so critical in the development of other harmonised policies.

A similar focus can be seen in the complex organisation required to select and implement a system for TUG. The system selection process directly involved over 30 people from all three institutions as key decision-makers and co-ordinators. Many library staff members from the three universities and affiliated and federated colleges were involved in demonstrations, feedback sessions, and scenario planning and testing. This major task lead to the first collaborative decision for TUG. It was critical that this task and process built effective relationships. By establishing a good working procedures based on some key principles of collaboration (accepted criteria, shared understanding, empowerment, and accountability) the libraries were able to draw staff together around a critical decision and enable effective working relationships.

A critical component in building relationships is trust. Trust is the basic constituent necessary for effective collaboration and teamwork. Trust is earned over time in situations of mutual interest and need. Trust is gained by being trustworthy. Creating opportunities to allow trusting relationships to emerge is central to a collaborative strategy. It is necessary to acknowledge that conflict is a normal outcome of co-operation; to resolve conflict is a means to test and forge even stronger bonds.

TUG collaboration did not happen "to" the libraries, it happened "with" them. It is only by an inclusive process with emphasis on widespread participation and consultation that TUG moved forward. From the outset the TriUniversity Group of Libraries sought the

active involvement of library staff, the user communities and the university administration. We sought the advice of circulation clerks and presidents, part-time staff and business officers, librarians and faculty members. By involving as many individuals, as much as possible, TUG was able to build commitment and understanding and shape the initiative to meet the needs of the all users: students and library staff, learners and teachers, administrators and auditors. This was an opportunity to meet, build relationships, explore new ideas and express concerns. The key outcome was trust; a level of trust that has become the foundation for subsequent work, innovations and initiatives. And it was fun!

By investing in staff involvement (front line staff as well as senior administrators) at both the conceptual and the operational stages TUG has nurtured a commitment from users, staff and senior administrators that has motivated staff and allowed the collaboration to withstand difficult times and hard decisions.

2. Learning

Shoshana Zuboff, in her book *In the Age of the Smart Machine*, indicated that "learning is the new form of labor". Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline*, speaks about "learning organizations". Zuboff and Senge are highlighting another key aspect of collaborative organisations: continuous learning; learning as the focus of work.

The organisation that emerges from collaborative ventures will be different from the sum of its parts. The emergent organisation will have to learn about itself: how it views its world, its values, and its focus. How will it respond to challenge? Learning becomes central to the development of alliances. This means that staff must come to terms with ambiguity: there will be many more questions than answers. The importance of learning is demonstrated by learning behaviour. Senior management were in learning situations with front line staff; they modeled the attitude that learning is natural and essential for all staff.

The TriUniversity Group of Libraries has made a sizable investment in training and development as a means to enhance learning. In June 1995 Richard Dougherty lead a Preferred Futures Workshop involving a diverse staff from the three libraries. It was from this workshop that the participants jointly evolved the idea of the "one library service" that still forms the metaphorical goal of harmonised services and resources.

At various stages of the collaboration TUG has employed external consultants to assist staff. There was initial skepticism to the need for consultants; some thought "we can do it ourselves." In hindsight this involvement has been invaluable. Experts have provided a "reality check" to TUG plans and processes. Most importantly the involvement of consultants and others allowed TUG to open itself up for scrutiny. It allowed the consultants to critique the collaboration (and allow the participants to do the same). Each time TUG not only received expert advice but the events allowed for a means for staff to articulate concerns and work through problems.

A particularly important resource has been the continuing involvement of staff from the Association of Research Libraries, Office of Management and Leadership Services (OMLS). OMLS staff, including Kathryn Deiss and George Soete, have lead various workshops and sessions for TUG professional staff focused on management practice and team building. Working with OMLS allowed the libraries to study and practice the same philosophy of library management and administration. We grew together around common ideas and shared experiences; this was an important reinforcement of the strategic direction taken by the libraries.

In February 1998 a TUG Collections Workshop was held bringing together, for the first time, approximately 30 librarians and staff involved in information resources and collections-related activities. This two-day event provided an opportunity to review and brainstorm this most difficult of all collaborative areas. While the focus was on collections, the workshop also provided a chance to critique and re-commit to TUG initiatives. The director's involvement was minimal; it was largely a staff directed initiative. It resulted in a renewal of the faith in the collaborative agenda and an accelerated activity in TUG collections and information resource matters.

And the learning will continue. TUG is constantly exploring new territory in the area of multi-institutional collaboration. Many more people throughout the organisations are creating opportunities for collaboration.

3. Leadership

Senior administrative commitment is fundamental; the University Librarians actively promoted and supported the collaborative strategy both within the libraries and within the academic and administrative groups on campus. The University Librarians modeled cultural expectations by working collaboratively as a team of three. The support of this group was visible, positive and frequent.

Team building in a collaboration environment is hard work; this is not the traditional work of administrators or leaders. It requires a commitment to a new approach and a new organisational focus. It is difficult for one organisation to make these adjustments and changes; it is even more difficult to orchestrate three organisations in making these transitions more or less in harmony.

It is imperative, however, that the University Librarians be committed to leadership and resist the temptation to control or manipulate. Having nurtured relationships among staff, staff must be given the responsibility and authority to make things happen, to shape the emerging nature of the consortium. In the system selection process, a diverse staff group had considerable authority. These people, drawn from throughout the libraries, were responsible for the evaluation and selection phase. They managed this process with considerable independence from the University Librarians. This achieved an important objective, that leadership becomes a responsibility of all staff.

Leading by example has also meant dealing with disagreement and conflict among the three University Librarians. The University Librarians do not always speak with one voice; they do not always agree on all issues. Working through our disagreements in a public and open manner has helped to develop more than tolerance for diversity. It celebrates diversity. It shows an acceptance and encouragement of divergent thinking. It models the application of creative tension towards shared goals.

The empowerment invested in the teams that operate the TUG initiatives encouraged commitment and ownership, and demonstrated trust by senior management. A sense of stewardship is emerging in which the care of the whole is considered not the individual institution. When an issue arises, the first question should be "what does this mean for the collaboration?" not "what does this mean for my library?"

An important new element in TUG leadership has been the creation of a TUG Program Coordinator position. The role is as a facilitator, coordinating and assisting the important communications and planning process that the TUG University Librarians were unable to continue to do effectively as the inter-institutional collaboration grew. He is an extension of the threesome, not an Executive Director, not a fourth University Librarian.

It is interesting to consider how the library leadership affected and was affected by other sectors of the universities. There was little to prepare the university or the library for the consequences of the collaboration. The University Librarians were fortunate to discover, in the process, that those administrative units on which the libraries depend for services and help were supportive.

4. Community Development

Perhaps the most important issue to be recognised and addressed is community development. In the course of planning and implementing a team-based approach to managing library services library leadership has consciously and deliberately enabled a community focused on user needs. Community development is not about structures or committees or supervisors; it is these each of these effectively working together. One cannot create climate (climate is a result of other actions) but we can enable a new culture by establishing new methods, approaches, actions, interactions and other aspects of organisational behaviour. Designing community is not a typical management skill; understanding what community development is will not be easy.

It is important to remember that in inter-organisational collaboration local need is still real and immediate. We are not one organisation; we are three organisations deeply linked together. There are still local identities and local cultures that are respected and enhanced. Maintaining a balance between consortium focus and local focus is a key aspect of developing a TUG culture that will be compatible with those at Guelph, Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier.

In this context one can underestimate the difficulty of making the transition to teams and to collaboration. The change of perspective from "me" to "us", from "I" to "we", from

"them" to "us" is extremely hard; there are many opportunities to revert to the "old ways." Sustaining the culture of the collaboration requires attention and maintenance. Teams need to be re-energised and re-focused. Values clarification is an important element of this. Are the values guiding the teams the same or divergent? Surfacing these issues will require frank and open discussions about values; sometimes an arduous and conflict ridden process.

Organisational Response

Predictably, the responses to the evolving cultural changes in the three participating libraries have varied according to their respective starting points. As the result both of experience and the various support activities that have been introduced, most staff members are aware of the goal that each needs to reach on a continuum toward thinking as a single service. Everyone has made progress and everyone has further to go.

Wilfrid Laurier, the smallest of the three institutions with a student population of about 6000, in many ways had the most to gain from the partnership. The level of technology that has been reached, and the variety of leading-edge services, whose development is in process, would simply not have been achievable within the parameters of Laurier's financial or staff resources. Nevertheless, there was, and there remains a concern among staff that they will lose independence and voice because they belong to the smallest member of the collaboration. There is a worry that Laurier will simply be swept up in the tide created by the other two larger institutions. In fact, this is not happening. There exists a mutual respect for the integrity of each of the three institutions; however a level of complete comfort on that subject has yet to be reached. Laurier has also felt a greater burden as the result of participating in the many three-member committees and task forces spawned by various TriUniversity library initiatives. Having fewer professional staff makes it necessary for each librarian to sit on several committees and the affect on workload is significant.

The University of Waterloo, on the other hand, came to the co-operative venture from the position of greatest strength, with a student body of about 18,000, a much larger budget and library staff and a more comprehensive and sophisticated level of information technology. Some Waterloo Library staff members were concerned that when they had just lost 50 library positions to budget cutbacks (20 in one year) they were now being asked to take on more work without benefit.

The University of Guelph, with a student population of about 13,000, fits neatly into the middle of the range. The Guelph Library has long enjoyed a reputation as a technological leader. There is a level of confidence among the staff which mitigates against concerns about being overshadowed by either of its partners. However, like Waterloo, downsizing and expanding demands have placed great pressure on library staff; they view TUG as both a solution to these challenges but also as an initiative that requires carefully blending with local needs and priorities. Members of all three institutions have had unique talents to bring into the partnership. Even the largest has

benefited from some of the contributions of the other two. For example, both the management of the Annex facility, and the development of a very sophisticated Data Centre emanate from the University of Guelph and serve both of the other two partners.

The enormous increase in outreach has been a major adjustment for staff in all three libraries. Many staff members are involved in one or more tripartite committee or task force, and most have learned to think 'TUG' when thinking through any initiative or concept. Teams were struck to address the implementation of each of the modules of the system. Committees were formed to address each of the other ongoing TUG initiatives, for example:

- policy setting for the Annex,
- a project for the joint mounting of electronic databases on a server accessible through the TRELIS system,
- a project to identify journal overlap to facilitate the next round of journal cancellations,
- a project to broaden the data service from one institution to three.

Once the various groups got working it became apparent that a considered approach needed to be taken to maintain communication among the groups. A number of umbrella groups, including one for Public Relations and one for testing and customising the various modules were struck in response. With the aid and guidance of the TUG Coordinator, procedures are evolving to channel communication appropriately among the groups and back and forth with the University Librarians. Appropriate communication and decision-making patterns are emerging. This did not happen without considerable effort and planning, and it continues to require monitoring.

As the evolution continues, the level of trust among the staff members in all three institutions is reaching a point where everyone is comfortable with one person or team from one institution accepting a responsibility on behalf of all three. This will obviously reduce the workload but it could not have been introduced before staff knew one another and had worked together. Staff members are now approaching that key observation.

Organisational impact may well be the most interesting consequence of this partnership. Having worked through the practical logistics of doing various things together, the refining of the process will provide great opportunity for personal growth and learning.

Second Thoughts

Not everything has gone as planned. As we reflect on the development of TUG to this point it is valuable to see areas where we could have done better, issues where greater attention was/is required and initiatives that should have been undertaken. These deficiencies and weaknesses offer lessons for us all.

Celebrating the successes is something TUG has not done as well as it should have. It is easy to forget how much has been accomplished as a consortium; things that could not have been achieved separately. Taking time to celebrate, reflect and renew based on that good feeling is extremely important and TUG simply must get better at this.

Initially team building and collaborative action represents more work and more things to do. Staff will lack skills or need time to practice newly acquired skills or understandings. When problems arise and progress is difficult people inevitably ask "why bother?" collaboration and teamwork is "too much trouble." It is necessary to constantly reinforce the value of teams, collaboration; the benefits (near and long term); staff (and users) must be aware of the benefits and reminded of the successes. TUG as a "collaboration" proved itself as it successfully engaged and achieved a series of projects (buy a storage facility, select a system, set up a shared database system). The project focus, while effective, in many ways delayed the development of a TUG culture, a TUG way of thinking about things. This perspective is developing as the collaboration deepens. It might have been better to do this more consciously as projects evolved.

This leads to perhaps the most important issue or area that needs improvement in our collaboration. Bringing together staff in team-based collaborative initiatives requires that the organisations and the individuals clarify the values (both personal and organisational) that they bring to the work, the goals and the objectives. Deeply held and expressed values inform much of how and why we work; these values guide us in our professional focus, our organisational direction and in our inherent measures of success. Value differences can be a powerful aspect of teamwork.

While the TUG University Librarians spoke many times about a process to bring the values discussion into the TUG arena this has yet to happen. There is disagreement on how to approach this. (e.g. attack it head-on, approach it obliquely, engage the issue as another "project", or let it evolve). TUG needs to be vigilant and to let it happen; be aware when the issue needs greater attention. By necessity and appropriately, individual teams have had to address the concern with values within the team framework. An overall values clarification process may have avoided problems, established a much firmer basis for collaboration and helped to intensify working relationships.

Conclusion

This is how you might like collaborative initiatives to develop (illustration of a straight, rising line). This is how the experts tell you they will develop (a rising line, steps backward, pauses). This is how it happened (lines all over the place). The nature of interlocking teams, groups and individuals will make the process far less predictable; different groups will be at different stages and will be having different levels of success. Our focus on the glue, the connections between and among the teams has brought coherence to the overall process.

In contemplating a collaborative approach, it is essential to think of a long-term plan. Collaboration is not a quick fix to immediate problems. A collaborative approach to library problem solving is not just an economic strategy. Effective collaborative solutions are not really about money or effective resource expenditure. The primary and enduring reasons for a team-based collaborative approach are the many positive benefits which will be experienced by those we are here to serve: the faculty, students and staff.

Ultimately, the TriUniversity Group of Libraries will be effective if it is in the interests of the clientele. To ensure this one must think strategically, focus on user needs and have fun.

Key Documents

"Integrated Programme Development: A Tri-Lateral Statement of Intent" February 22, 1995. The foundation agreement for the collaboration.

(http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/News/UWLibDocs/joint_agree.html)

"TRELIS Project Home Page" The website for the new library system implementation. TRELIS is the name of the shared system (the product is Voyager from Endeavor Information Systems Inc.). This site reveals the extensive collaborative processes put in place to implement the system and reflects the TUG commitment to communication and involvement. (<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infolib/>)

"for your information" Vol. 4, No. 2 December 1996. The Library Annex. An online version of the University of Waterloo Library newsletter introducing the new Library Annex. (<http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/fyi/fyi4-2.html>)

"Towards Effective Collaboration: the Tri-University Library Consortium." A paper presented at the 1996 Ontario Universities Computing Conference (OUCC) outlining the collaboration strategies of the TUG initiative. (<http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/TUG-OUCC96.html>)

"Tri-University Group of Libraries System Collaboration Project." A paper presented at the 1997 International Association of Technical University Libraries (IATUL) outlining the rationale for TUG, the guiding principles and the methods used to select and implement a shared library system. (<http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/info/IATUL/index.htm>)

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